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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iran Bush Iraqi Policy  
Middle East - Israel and Palestinian Elections  
PARIS - Wednesday, January 11, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iran  
Bush Iraqi Policy  
Middle East - Israel and Palestinian Elections

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic social and economic stories dominate today's front pages, but Iran, President Bush's Iraqi policy and the political situation in Israel are all top international stories.

Le Figaro headlines: "Bush and Chirac's Warnings to Iran." In his report Alain Barluet comments: "Iran's latest initiative brings the prospect of the UN getting involved closer." "Iran Pursues Its Nuclear Challenge" is the headline of Liberation, which adds: "Western warnings have gone unheeded." In her article Veronique Soule writes: "The West's higher level of protest is equal to the level of its impotence" while the editorial is entitled "Escalation." (See Part C) Bruno Tertrais of the Foundation for Strategic Research, analyzes the situation: "Tehran's strategy is to confuse the West, in order to have the widest margin of maneuver possible. I am convinced Iran is interested in the bomb. But I do not believe it has already made the decision to build it. This is a major test for the West and the NPT: if Iran were to withdraw from it, the treaty would not survive. Others would follow. The concern is even greater because of the regime's rhetoric. The strategy of the carrot and the stick used till now is not effective because the carrot is not sufficiently appealing, and the threat not terribly worrisome. The regime's attitude has been encouraged by the fact that the West has not implemented its threats. We must adopt a harsher stance."

Popular right-of-center France Soir entitles its report: "On the Road to the Bomb." Inside, the article quotes U.S. Ambassador to the IAEA, Gregory Shulte, also quoted by Le Figaro: "The Iranian officials have proven their contempt for international concerns and international diplomacy."

Liberation carries a report on the Asia Pacific "partnership for clean development and the climate," which opens today in Sidney. Denis Delbecq writes: "According to the Americans, technology rather than a change in behavior will save the planet." He entitles his report: "No Sunshine at the Other Climate Summit" and begins: "The lead word here is, 'change nothing.'"

The threat of an Avian flu epidemic continues to elicit concerned reports in light of the cases diagnosed in Turkey. In La Croix Denis Sergent interviews Christophe Paquet, Director of the Institut Sanitaire: "The risk level for France has not changed and remains the same despite the numbers of new infectious sites found in Turkey. For the time being there are no cases of the virus having been transmitted by humans."

La Croix and Le Figaro report on Latin America's angry reaction to the wall between the U.S and Mexico. In La Croix Gilles Biassette quotes Vincente Fox: "This wall is shameful. Such walls are part of another century." Le Figaro reports on the economic impact to Latin America, "which in 2004 received over 45 billion dollars from relatives working in the U.S. More than the combined amounts in international investment and cooperation aid."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iran

"Escalation"

Patrick Sabatier in left-of-center Liberation (01/11):  
"Resumption of the EU-3 talks with Iran have been compromised by Tehran's latest decision. The Mullah's regime has chosen escalation in small steps taken in a fog which obscures their ultimate goal. This attitude added to the President's recent declarations on Israel make it impossible to imagine this is a

form of strategy for negotiation. In addition to its aggressive stance, Iran has also hidden the nature of its true activities in Natanz. Once caught, Iran did not adopt a cooperative attitude: now, the level of the West's confidence in Iran is just about nil. The Mullahs will continue to maneuver to obtain the bomb so long as they feel they can avoid confrontation and sanctions; this could be fatal for Iran. The only thing that might bring them around is an agreement between the members of the international community to bring Iran before the UNSC."

#### "Bush And Chirac Warn Iran"

Alain Barluet in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/11): "Iran's challenge to the West has elicited a wave of condemnation from around the world. The White House has warned Iran against 'a serious escalation,' saying that 'uranium conversion activities would be considered a new violation of Iran's agreement with the Europeans.' As for Chirac, he warned Iran and North Korea in his traditional New Year speech when he said: 'both countries would be making a major mistake in not accepting the hand that we are extending to them.' Tehran's obvious deafness could lead the IAEA to bring the issue before the UNSC, a step towards sanctions against Iran. With this prospect getting closer, the West is showing increasing signs of discomfort, which explains that their warnings have become more vigorous."

#### Bush Iraqi Policy

##### "The Shady Zones of Bush's Iraqi Policy"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/11): "As President Bush continues give the same speeches, military, political and economic truths on Iraq are beginning to filter out. President Bush is repeating the same arguments about the war on terror, democracy and the Iraqi example. His rhetoric has become so repetitive that the American public and media have stopped listening. Yet one can infer important truths from what the President is not saying. President Bush no longer talks about his allies in Iraq. This may be because the alliance is breaking up. Similarly, in order not to attract attention to deserters, the Pentagon has decided to not take disciplinary action against them. And despite the need for transparency, the (budget) accounts for the war remain unclear. As for what has been accomplished on the ground, the achievements are not as important as planned. Twenty-five percent of the budget has been eaten up by security needs. And no new funds for reconstruction will be presented in the next budget. Leon Fuerth's political deal about democratic support in exchange for the truth is indeed revealing."

#### Middle East - Israel and Palestinian Elections

##### "Israel Bends to Rice on Palestinian Elections"

Patrick Saint Paul in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/11): "The controversy within the Israeli government about allowing Palestinians to vote in East Jerusalem . was settled after a phone conversation between Ehud Olmert and Secretary Rice. and a compromise was reached. The U.S. has remained firm because it does not wish the Palestinian elections to be postponed. As for Ehud Olmert, he does not want to start on the wrong foot with Washington, Israel's principal ally. He has therefore given in to U.S. pressure, even at the cost of looking 'soft' and ready to compromise Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem in the eyes of the Israeli right." STAPLETON